



Issue #8 – November 2025



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**THE
COUNTERFORCE**
hardcore punk underground

What is this? **The Counterforce** is an initiative to push back against the corporate capture of hardcore punk. Social media apps and streaming platforms dominate how we interact online, including how we share and distribute our music and ideas. The corporations that run these platforms extract massive profits from us, which they use to fund and facilitate exploitation, war, and genocide. Meanwhile, our independent and underground alternatives have eroded.

The goal of The Counterforce is to strengthen and grow the hardcore punk underground that still exists outside of this corporate capture. Rather than funnel punk into profit-driven walled gardens, we want to foment and encourage a culture that is autonomous and independent. This is not just a nostalgic, backward-facing project—we want to explore new alternatives for spreading hardcore punk online and offline.

You are reading issue #8 of the print version of The Counterforce.

Find the files to print and distribute this zine (and others like it) yourself online at <https://the-counterforce.org>

There, you will also find the other arms of The Counterforce:

A WEB ZINE

This site publishes reviews, letters, scene reports, profiles/interviews, rants, and how-to guides, all with an emphasis on projects that try to exist outside of corporate platforms.

In part, we hope this will encourage human-driven curation, recommendation, and discovery. Find out about new bands that aren't on the streaming sites. Submit a review of your own band. Compile a scene report or show review and send it in. We also publish articles and DIY how-to guides to help empower other punks to build and participate in a scene that's less centered around evil apps.

All this is published online, but also compiled into regular print zine editions to bring paper back to the punk show (like the version you are reading now).

A DIRECTORY OF SIMILARLY ALIGNED PROJECTS

The Internet is breaking down. Websites outside of a handful of apps have slowly disappeared, and the ones that are still out there are harder and harder to find.

The Counterforce provides a directory of these websites: blogs, archives, distros, zines, radio shows and podcasts... anywhere hardcore punk can be found online (and maybe offline too!).

A PLACE TO EXPERIMENT WITH AND LEARN ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

It's easy to shit on the corporate social media and streaming platforms, but what other options are there? There are alternatives and we try them out—public online show calendars, open-source social media, self-hosted music sharing—and encourage other punks to join us.



THE COUNTERFORCE IS A DISTRIBUTED AND COMMUNITY PROJECT

Find everything online at: the-counterforce.org

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PRINT THIS ZINE

This zine is available on our website as a PDF you can print out and distribute yourself, with more coming soon.

do an LP. This all sounds like I'm shit talking, but I'm a huge sucker for this stuff. I listen to that 2012 OROKU LP regularly. I would love to see this band with two guitars and extended spoken word sections/ between songs speeches at an outdoor show with a lot of oogles. I thought the person who gave it to me was from Philly, but then later I learned they biked up from Vermont for the show, rather than tagging along with the various Philly bands. The photos in the insert kind of look like Pittsburgh. So I'm not sure if this is a Philly band or a Vermont band or just spread our across the north east USA. But Pittsburgh fits the lyrics and themes, earnest wrestling with the environmental destruction and decay wrought by capitalism that is particular to the rust belt. I look forward to hearing more!

I found their bandcamp, so you can listen here: <https://sedimentphl.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2025>

—Martin Force



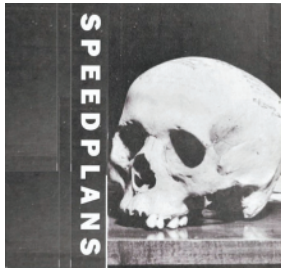
SPEED PLANS - D.U.I. 7"

Wouldn't particularly consider myself a nostalgoid, but at least I can always go back and listen to the "More Hardcore" LP.

While they still earn the "Speed" half of their moniker, they seem much more interested in following through on best-laid "Plans" with each successive release, chipping away at the more free and unhinged inclinations of the previous outing in favor of a more sanded down and sculpted vision, just outside my field of interest.

A technically good and thoroughly competent record, I'll toss it a 2/5, 1 for velocity and 1 for brevity.

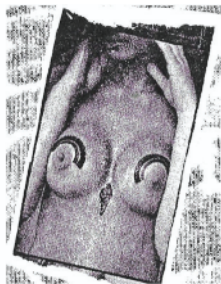
Released by Convulse Records, listen here: <https://speedplans.bandcamp.com/album/dui-7>
—Ralph Rivera



SPEED PLANS - Speed Plans CS

Some interview I read made them seem real self-conscious about their "More Hardcore" LP, but this release sounds a fair bit safer and codified than the slab I first slobbered over. All of these got rerecorded for their big Convulse debut, so we'll see how the finished product holds up, but I can't imagine revisiting these renditions ever again.

Released by Kill Enemy Records, listen here: <https://killenemycords.bandcamp.com/album/speed-plans-tape>
—Ralph Rivera



UNITED STARE - United Stare

YMMV on the cover art and you'd be forgiven for guessin' the whole presentation'll getcha some post-hockey jock, pre-jarhead Triple B Records flower-era BS, but goddamn. The kick off is an absolute mind-worming ass-shaker, plucked straight from the back

half of a BROWN SUGAR rekkid and pulled forward into the NOW, the remaining 6/7s is pure punk rock n roll a la RADIO BIRDMAN (which they dispute, but come the fuck on), PAGANS, or that time the REPOS covered DEAD BOYS.

Released by Kill Enemy Records, listen here: <https://killenemycords.bandcamp.com/album/united-stare>
—Ralph Rivera

A DIGITAL ZINE DISTRO

Major punk fanzines of the past fell victim to the rising costs of printing and shipping. We publish printable PDFs of our zines online for anyone to print and distribute themselves, and encourage other zinesters to submit their own.

What if instead of shipping zines around the world, any punk anywhere could log on, download some PDFs and scam some copies to have a fully stocked, PWYC zine distro at the next show? Print-It-Yourself!

A HARD LINE AGAINST CONTRIBUTING TO FURTHER CORPORATE CAPTURE OF OUR SUBCULTURE

- No links to Instagram, Spotify, Linktree, Discord, or other corporate platforms.
- No coverage of releases that are on major labels, or only available digitally on corporate streaming platforms.
- Always independent and not-for-profit.

For expanding the hardcore punk mutual aid autonomous zone.

For facilitating human curation and recommendation.

For hardcore punk with context and politics.

Against celebrity, ladder climbers, clout chasers and influencers.

Against the algorithmic flattening of our subculture.

Against the capitalist death machine and the corporate capture of hardcore punk.

Contributors to this issue: automattack, Ben Rudolph, Greg the Builder, Hobbes, Joe the Photo Guy, Jolie M-A, Kaitlynn Cruz, Marginal, Martin Force, Rachael Shorr, Ralph Rivera, STUNK and Taylor Joy. Cover by Sara Elbourne. Layout by Taylor Joy.

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LIFE IS BRIEF, PUNK RULES: A Recap of STRESS POSITIONS Fall 2025 Tour

by Ben Rudolph

The first show of our fall tour was at Cobra lounge in Chicago. A nice and early all-ages gig on a beautiful, late summer Thursday. I pick up Steph and we head down to the venue. We are chronically on time to pretty much every gig we play. Jono, Russell and Danny are there to meet us for load in. After an hour or so of mulling around and hanging out with the other bands, people start showing up. Mostly young-ass kids who are stoked as hell to see the headliner. Our friends in the band LATTER are celebrating the release of their new EP tonight. A small cluster gathers in front of the stage trying to secure their spot for the show. I love this energy. It's refreshing to see people giddy and ready to dance rather than jaded and drunk. It's gonna be packed in here soon. KILL MOVES opens the show. They play a sort of mix of emo and noise rock. Changeover takes a little longer than ideal, but now it's our turn to play. The lights on the stage are bright as hell and it's hard to see what's going on out in the sea of people. It seemed like people had fun even though half of them looked confused for the lack of mosh parts. Play fast or die! We rush off stage sweaty as hell. SNUFFED is next. They get better and tighter every time I see them and the kids go absolutely bonkers. Hell yeah. Everyone sings along as their vocalist Carly screams "ITS MY LOBOTOMY DREAM"

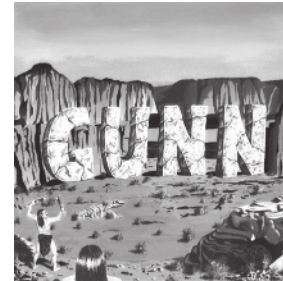
LATTER is next. They're a somewhat newer band but have been hitting it hard this last year. They play a down-tuned medley of noise rock and punk. Hard to compare to anything in particular, but it's powerful. Their stage show is wild as hell and the crowd is buzzing. Hell yeah. It's so great to see a room full of sweaty young people hanging on to every word. The show ends at 11 and we're all home by midnight. Tomorrow

is going on in other corners of the scene here.

DEADBOLT is really paving the way on all fronts. They also have a DIY website, which is impressive, since most hardcore bands here have an Instagram before they have a demo tape. Also, it's fantastic: <https://deadbolt514.bandcamp.com/album/disillusion>

The tape is available for download on said website, or on Bandcamp: <https://deadbolt514.bandcamp.com/album/disillusion>

—Martin Force



G.U.N.N. – G.U.N.N. LP

Been a GUNN truther for a minute, and the half of this that sounds like BATTALION OF SAINTS, you know that sneered-up, black-leather-in-the-hot-sun type Cali shit, easily clears the mental-mythical madness I ascribe to the Shooters in question. Mixed up in all that is a bit too much post 7"-era CULO. Still, half is more than most may muster, and, paired with a sense of humor, moronic (complimentary) cover art, and well-curated samples, this is worth a spin or two.

Released by Going Underground Records, listen here: <https://goingundergroundrecords.bandcamp.com/album/g-u-n-n>

—Ralph Rivera



LINOLEUM – The Big Sad

Zillennial MASSHYSTERI, which was Xennial BURNING KITCHEN, (and the millennials skipped a gen toiling away in the mysterioid sex pest dungeon and/or KCMO glue dens), which is to say this is very good, very catchy. Repetitive (in a good way) vocal hooks, great melodic guitar work that occasionally makes way for SEEMS TWICE by way of CRASS Records no-punk diversions. Very Euro cover art, as bad as the HONDARTZAKO HONDAKINAK LP cover, both of which risk consigning an otherwise great release to bargain bin obscurity.

Thanks to Saffi's Punk Playlist for turning me onto this.

Released by Schalltraeger Recordings, listen here: <https://linoleum.bandcamp.com/album/the-big-sad>

—Ralph Rivera

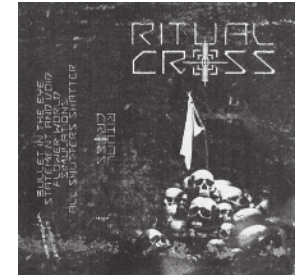


PURE TERROR – EHTERAM 7"

Meaner, heavier, angrier, and tighter than their 2023 Blood Oath CS, PURE TERROR's "Ehteram" EP is an escalation in nearly every regard. Like the bastard child of Amy and Roger Miret (Psych, they were married! Their brood would be blessed, truly, the Romeo + Juliet of your parents' time!), this is a record that could only come from New York, a brooding combination of classic NYHC crunch and grit with the art damaged crust of the Vermiform/Gern Blandsten contingent.

Released by Toxic State Records, listen here: <https://toxicstater-ecords.bandcamp.com/album/ehteram>

—Ralph Rivera



RITUAL CROSS – Ritual Cross

A harsh judgment, perhaps, but knowing some of these players from well-played but firmly "not-for-me" pop punk outfits, I just didn't know they had this in them.

Sounds like: Earth-2 ARTICLES OF FAITH's debut 7" "What We Want is Blood"

Feels like: a brick and a knife and a boot to the temple.

Looks like: Chicago still likes hardcore.

Self released, listen here: <https://ritualcross.bandcamp.com/album/ritual-cross>

—Ralph Rivera



SEDIMENT – DEMO 2025

It's dark anarchist crusty punk. It reminds me of earnest political early 2000s crust. The lyrics The first song ends with group vocals chanting "Can you smell the oil seeping from the spoiled ground?" but musically it's not as melodic.

These demo songs are pretty straight forward, unrelenting pots-and-pans d-beat, no breakdowns or octave leads. But there is an acoustic/clean guitar intro to the last song. Maybe there will be a string section added if they ever

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throughout Latin America and Japan notwithstanding, the shoe-string antennae picked up the frequency and a resonant harmony was mostly achieved.

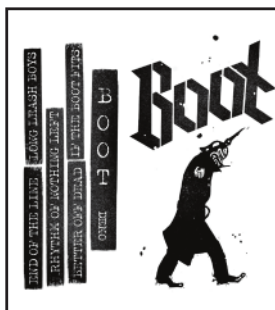
They let Washington DC and, eventually, Florida splice in endless breakdowns, and the vocal delay got cranked to indecipherable levels. The writing on the wall and the well running dry, LVEUM even started putting out Americans! They had blokes singing in Esperanto and then all of a sudden you can get LUMPY & THE DUMPERS records on five continents! Maybe things were tinged or essenced with natural flavors, but your odds of coming across 100% raw, unadulterated d-beat hardcore punk were essentially nil.

And maybe the lesson was simple: just don't let anyone from the US make d-beat, or possibly punk period, for like 3-7 years, atonement for not gatekeeping DISCHARGE or BASTARD from HardLore hard enough! Leave it to the Argentinian expats, or, in this case, the Canadians.

BLACK DOG fucking smokes. Unholy, unrelenting, uncompromising. The best record Iron Lung has put out in years. Blast it loud and often, let no one in dark blue 501 Levis within 50 miles (that's 80 anna half kms for the rest of you).

Released by Iron Lung (a label I love and respect, but please direct all confused hate mail to anyonecan-bethebug@riseup.net, not da rag), listen here: <https://ironlungrecords.bandcamp.com/album/sewn-in-to-confusion-lungs-286>

—Ralph Rivera



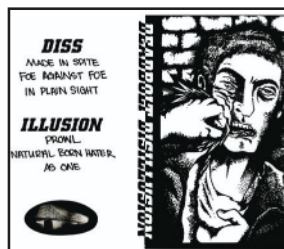
BOOT – Varning Demo

BOOT (or B.O.O.T. ?) is a bit of an Ottawa supergroup. Ska Jeff (needs no introduction) joins Will from GERM ATTACK (and countless other bands) to provide the rhythm section. The guitarist Greg was also in a local-secret screamo band in Montreal in the 2010s called KALE (it was better than you're thinking).

Normally I wouldn't be that excited about another band influenced by the current Oil/skinhead trend, especially with a name like BOOT. But... BOOT is good! There are the simple guitar melodies but there is an extra cold dreariness to the songs. It works out well when take a former introspective screamo guitarist and put him in suspenders and boots! The lyrics actually have something interesting to say, and the vocals are catchy without being too corny (I'll forgive "if the boot fits"). I liked this a lot more than I expected to and I hope they'll get to play out more in Canada + beyond.

Listen to the non-Varning version of the demo on their bandcamp: <https://bootonourthroat.bandcamp.com/album/demo>

—Martin Force



DEADBOLT – Disillusion

First, this is the best sounding DEADBOLT recording so far. I've seen DEADBOLT a lot but it's rare that their live sound lives up to how hard this recording sounds. Maybe we need to get Seb a second guitar cab?

I feel safe in saying that DEADBOLT has finally slotted into the power vacuum left by GAZM and formerly occupied by OMEGAS. Few bands can straddle Montreal's punk and capital-H-hardcore scene without being trapped by whatever current trends are stagnating each one at any given time. Sonically, they are not afraid to mix influences from both scenes citing TOWER 7, WARTHOG, alongside JUDGE and CHAIN OF STRENGTH as influences in a recent interview that appears in our local punk newsletter of record La Chaine. There is also a WARZONE cover and every song has at least one obligatory but brief guitar solo (they also shout out SANTANA in that interview). Only the unhindered creativity of youth can blend influences like this without pretension and produce a coherent output. Much like GAZM did before them. It's a breath of fresh air when the rest of Montreal's Hardcore scene seems intent on starting the same mediocre beatdown-type band over and over again and won't even listen to a d-beat, let alone check out what

we hit the road for Cincinnati. The tour is just quick, six-day run through Appalachia, the final destination is Richmond where we will be playing Dark Days Bright Nights Fest.

The next day everyone meets at my place at 11. We all dote on my new pup Harley, an old anxious pitbull. She's sad to see us go. We hit horrible traffic leaving the city, but once we get through it's about as uneventful as a drive could be. We arrive at The Comet (again chronically early for the show) and realize no one is there for the gig yet. A few of us find a forest preserve nearby and go for a hike. My favorite pre-show ritual. We meet a friendly black cat along the trail. Must be a good sign. Steph and Danny later decide to go and do the quick hike and again meet the black cat. Definitely a good sign.



Back at the venue we are all killing time by playing pool. The Comet provides free food for bands and we all stuff down burritos. Some people hate all the waiting around you have to do on tour. I love it. It will always beat going to work. BUTCHERS DOG is the first band to play. I heard their record "Purists Piss Codes" a while ago and hadn't seen them live yet — they did not disappoint. I met Landon and Jodie a few years back with another band. They're immense sweethearts who are absolute punk lifers. RAZORBLADE from Pittsburgh played as well. They're fun as fuck. Punk AF thrash stuff. They did a medley of "Come Feel The Noise," it was fun. There was a somewhat solemn note to the evening as we found out the owner of The Comet had recently passed away. He seemed to be beloved by the community for helping create and maintain an all-ages space in town. These places are precious and not always owned by people who have good intentions so we're very happy to be able to celebrate the life of someone who contributed so much. Keeping the gigs going through grief seems like it's exactly what they would've wanted.

Our gig in Roanoke the next day was unfortunately cancelled as the basement venue we were supposed to play had flooded. It's a bummer to lose a show on such a short tour but these things happen. Finding a replacement last minute is easier said than done. We do the 10 hour drive to Richmond. It's at least a beautiful winding route through Appalachia to help pass the time. We finally get to our hotel at around 10pm. I grabbed us some cookies from the Subway next door and we surf the TV for a while and end up watching *Queen of the Damned*. We all pass out by midnight. Hell yeah. Getting good sleep on tour is a high commodity.

We wake up early and smash the free breakfast at the hotel. A few of us use the gym. Coffee and then more coffee and it's time to head to the venue. Load in is at 2. We get there at 1:45 to make sure we can snag a good parking spot. There are like 10 bands playing today so we'd rather make sure things are easy. The venue is called Studio Two Three. The building is reminiscent of an old schoolhouse. The first floor has a screen printing shop. The show will be upstairs in what seems like an old school gym/assembly hall.

At this point in my life I've been doing punk shit for longer than I haven't. The buzz I get showing up for a fest is the same as it was 20-odd years ago when I first got into touring. I love scanning all the tables for merch, records and zines. I love seeing people I haven't seen in years and reconnecting as if it's only been a week. I owe so much to these experiences and friendships. The bill today is absolutely stacked and filled with friends. A musically very eclectic bill as well. SLOW HOLE, EYE FLYS and GREAT FALLS all blew me away.

The venue had a giant projector. All the bands got to pick what they wanted to have playing behind them. We chose a compilation video of dogs just doing cute dog shit. Who doesn't love that?



IRON LUNG played late in the evening. They were pulverizing. Less stand up comedy in between songs than other times I've seen them, but that added to the vibe of today's set. It was relentless and punishing. REVERSAL OF MAN closed out the night. It was so cool to finally see them. The four of us grew up in Florida and never had a chance while they were still active. They were fantastic and full of the same energy that all of the lore speaks to. A bucket list band for me and Jono especially. A great way to end an epic day.

We set off for Asheville early the next morning. Again, another beautiful drive winding through the mountains.

We arrive at Static Age, again early, and find coffee. This was our first time playing here with this band so we didn't know what to expect. The small record store filled up quickly after the doors opened. A lot of really enthusiastic young punks showed up which is always a good sign. MOCKERY played right before us and they fucking ripped. Nine minutes of raw D-beat. A killer first set for them. Look out for recordings soon. This was probably my favorite performance for us on this run. I love playing a small room. Steph and I are constantly dancing around each other trying to not knock the other over. It never gets old. The kids went bat shit, side to sides and slamming the whole time. The room was electric and we were all buzzing after. Hell yeah.

But look, listen, feel: authentic, uncompromising, unrelenting. No bargaining, no reservations. Hard music for hard times, not background noise. Real punk music, whispering secrets fit only for the True Believers.

Music for fighting, that our dreams become reality.

—Ralph Rivera



THREE RECORDS LEFT BY THE CAT-SITTER'S BOYFRIEND

The title says it all... I went out of town, and my cat-sitter's boyfriend left a small stack of records for me. I'd never heard of any of the bands, so I was excited to dive into them.

ATENTADO — Todo Está Oscuro EP (2009)

I drop the needle, and screechy guitar feedback fades in. I smile. The drummer starts with a proper d-beat, and the band kicks in almost immediately. It sounds terrible, and I love it. Four songs of raw d-beat worship without any of the pretentious bullshit. Crappy guitar sound, and rough production with vocals up front. Side 2 is more of the same. It's like this record was made for me. The lyrics are in Spanish and seem to be about personal issues, like depression and suicidal ideation, rather than the typical DISCHARGE-style "war is bad." I have to find their LP.

Listen at <https://discosenfermo-spunk.bandcamp.com/album/de-01-atentado-todo-esta-os-curo-7>

BOMBED OUT — Human Disease EP (2008)

I was told this was an Ottawa classic, a treasure, and an important piece of Ottawa punk history. I probably would have liked this in 2008, but in 2025, it's difficult to

distinguish BOMBED OUT from all the other d-beat and adjacent bands. I like the multiple singers, uncomplicated song structures, and the unpolished production, but I want it to be faster and more raw. This one has the DISCHARGE-style lyrics about war (they are called BOMBED OUT after all), but it reminds me more of SOCIAL DISTORTION's 1945 than DISCHARGE. Probably because the first song is also about when the US dropped a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima. Not bad, but it doesn't get me excited.

Listen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS-aMVd5db0>

EYE-GOUGE! — Fast Pissed Off & Proud (2009)

This is a one-sided seven-inch. I like it when bands think outside the box a bit, so the format alone piques my interest. Snotty and fast. Samples. A few covers. Even an unlisted track or two... It's got a lot of things I like on one side of a seven-inch. A rare gem indeed.

Listen at <https://eyegougecchc.bandcamp.com/album/fast-pissed-off-and-proud>

—automattack



ANSWERING MACHINES — THE BIG CATCH CS

If you didn't experience the ANSWERING MACHINES at least once in 2024 (or 2025, for that matter!), I truly don't know where you were or what you were doing (nowhere, nothing). A band so good they set up franchises and I've been fortunate enough to catch (yes pun, no pun, whichever way ya like it) both the Chicago and Tejas rosters during my fleeting time

upon this dying orb; one runs shop a bit looser, the other tighter, both command the time and space they inhabit totally.

And the biggest catch? A third option: a portable dispatch from frequencies beyond, the never drab plastic slab I've fixed to gab on right here. Catchy kooky big and bouncy, meant for shuffling the feet and shaking the ass.

Self-released, listen here: <https://answeringmachines1.bandcamp.com/album/the-big-catch>

—Ralph Rivera



BARREN SOIL — All Paths Lead To Darkness

Ur-crust perfection. The only time spent in the stadium is burning the fucker to the ground.

Self released, listen here: <https://earnthedirt.bandcamp.com/album/all-paths-lead-to-darkness>

—Ralph Rivera



BLACK DOG — SEWN INTO CONFUSION 7"

Maybe 10, 15 years ago, the memetic monks of the d-beat worldmind fired their decree down the psychic wire: "ALL D-BEAT MUST SUCK!" And, it must be said, some heretic hold-outs scattered

REVIEWS

FOUR THINGS AT ONCE

It's four things at once on my mind at 5am, dispatching, as we are, LIVE from the 3rd stage. And the bargain, True Believers, is maybe if you make up for the lost time spent shubbing it up overnight in dank and humid Chicago alleys for two months straight makin' sin-ema (a contraction, if you'll allow it: Sin + Enema), stay productive, you're on your ass laid out like never before, but avoid the electromanic pull of the void, and maybe maybe maybe it will have been worth the last two months of your best friend's life. (Ohhhhh oh oh, I doubt it!)

Let's talk what this isn't: it's not a column, [designer's note: i put it with the columns] though I've promised one [editor's note: see THINK! Column 1 on page 29] and it's been asked of me, no no no, this is the delicate act of balancing four things at once, and since we've established one may wax Bangsian times two in a space built for one, what's twice THAT while the Boss is away from his desk? (How's Varning?)

So, again, it's 5am, the last hard line between the real and the un-; the glow is inchin' and creepin', an old friend with yet another secret to tell, and there you are stirrin' and the leg's a throbbin' and so's yer noggin' and if you scroll for even one more fucking second you know, without question, that you've dropped your end of the bargain so stop!, STOPI, the finger hovers over the latest Crucified Freedom entry, a Croatian Hardcore Punk blog you follow to intermittently pore over in hopes a new name in an unfamiliar tongue might hop out and beckon you in your dreamlike state upon some clandestine excursion.



EGZISTENCIJALNA KRIZA – Anti-politika

EGZISTENCIJALNA KRIZA. Existential crisis. The synchronicity of it is astounding. The first four tracks on "Anti-Politika" are total mixtape bait: fast, sincere, no pose Hardcore Punk straight from Pula, Croatia. Very Italian in execution, evoking greats like DECLINO, INDIGESTI, and NEGAZIONE, bundling them up and reporting for duty at the SOLUNSKI FRONT.



LAS PALMAS – Primera Linea

Beyond the Front, we find the "First Line," specifically "Primera Linea" by LAS PALMAS, a short lived outfit from Verona, Italy. The label's write up describes the city as the country's most conservative and you can tell. Unhinged, repetitive, surreptitious, 3 tracks of catharsis boiled over. What Minneapolis' WILD COMBO would have sounded like if they got locked in a closet with only the TOTAL CHAOZ demos. Devoid of ego, the mirror pointed outwards. An absolute must listen as we journey further into chaos and arrive at "Heaven's Gate..."



PHIZ – Heaven's Gate

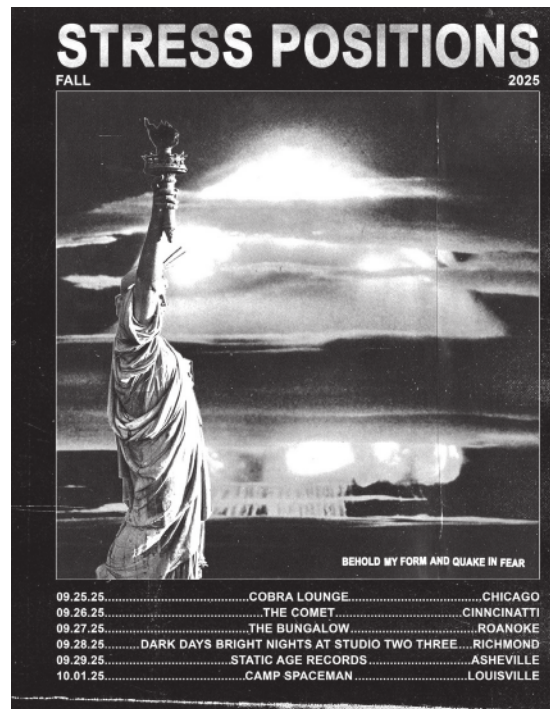
The latest offering from Dusseldorf's PHIZ, it's by far the most focused and produced of these dreamscape monuments, but no less primal. They fire with a higher success rate than the previously reviewed MOTHER NATURE, successfully merging their (presumably nascent) psychedelic inclinations with the burly, thinking man's Capital H as perfected by California's DIZTORT.



SOGNO LIBERO – Sogno Libero

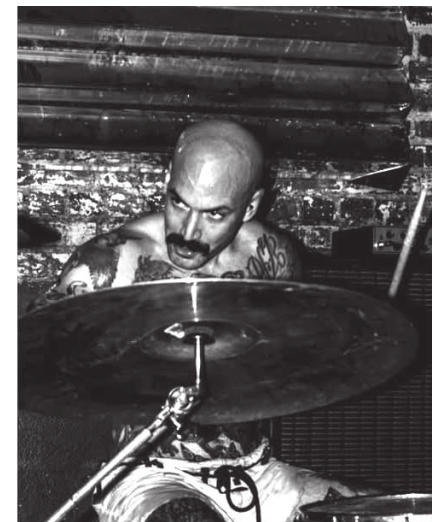
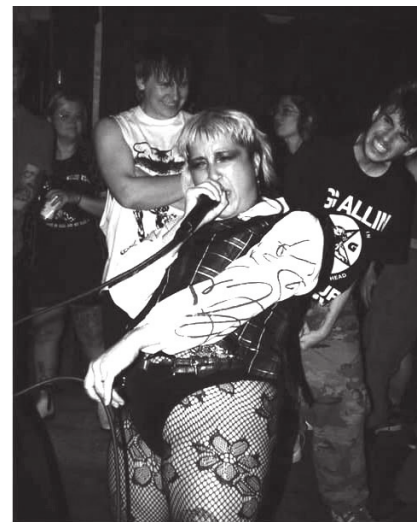
At last, the end of the dream: SOGNO LIBERO, label-mates and members of LAS PALMAS, no less unhinged, but darker, surely. The drums are precise and utilitarian, the guitars wail, the staccato, rapid-fire vocal delivery recalls countrymen EU'S ARSE and WRETCHED.

So, what, beyond some potentially overlapping influences, binds these seemingly disparate releases? Quite possibly sleep deprivation and mania!



Another beautiful drive to Louisville. Tonight's show is at warehouse spot called Camp Spaceman. The whole place reminded me of one of the big squat venues in Germany. Wall-to-wall graffiti and a sick professional PA. The stage is just high enough to dive off but not too high to where you feel far away. The gig starts promptly at 7. TOTAL FLESH were one of my favorite bands of the tour. They play fast, 80s-style American hardcore. No bullshit and catchy in all the right ways. DEADY headlined. Another band I've been itching to see for a while. A truly unique and refreshing band. They sounded immaculate. Their last song of the set involved inviting everyone in the crowd on stage to dance and bang on the drums. People went nuts. Good vibes all round.

We headed back home to Chicago the next day. The news that the National Guard is supposedly being deployed to our streets sets in. We've been reading about and hearing from friends all week about the massively increased ICE presence and their kidnapping of people in our home. For now we have a few hours in the van to contemplate the last few days and savor how lucky we are to get do this stuff. Life is brief. Punk rules. 🍌



SKULL FEST 15

AUG 14-17 PGH

NEGATIVE APPROACH

DESTROY

FOVER

the NERVOSAS

DROPPED DROPPED

CONDOR

GAPE

IRON LUNG

CROSSES

BAT

DESTRUCT

Anxxiet/ languid

SEX WARE

ZORN

Béton

TRUE BODY

Armé

HELLS GIDE

ILLUSTRATION

SUBMACHINE

Yellowcake

PEACE TALKS

DARK

NECRON 9

MACHINE GUN

FUCKIN' LOVERS

DEADLY

DE RODILLAS

DEATH GASP

CICADA KARTEL

FAZZE

PINK MIST

COMPLETE Fucker

headsplitters

SHATTER

Shooting

UNINFORMED SERVICE

SPLO

¿LA PREGUNTA? Slugger

PAPRIKA

TAZ

ultimatum

KATO

GRASSY KNOLL

CORRUPT FAITH

SYMPATHY FLOWERS

ARCHIMAGE

PISTON

skallar

CONDUMPT

SCONTRO

X-TRADITION

DISKET

PILLTIME

EKGs

CHILDREN with DOG

WHO PAPS...

VENMO

KEPER

Commitment

Death Instinct

Ar Son

STRESS POSITIONS

LILAC / WEB

AMUSEMENT

ALLERGY

COLUMNS • COLUMNS • COLUMNS • COLUMNS • COLUMNS • COLUMNS • COLUMNS

pulling pud (and, being charitable to myself for once, recovering). Every couple weeks, I remember this goal and, as I'm unemployed for another 3 months, I have absolutely zero reason to abandon (read: delay) this project any longer (save for an unyielding compulsion to pull pud, get the man a straitjacket!)

I've listened to the first six albums (two a piece from the initial three lists) so many times at this point that I probably don't ever need to listen to them ever again. Pushead's first two entries fucked up the curve for their cohort. What possible hope for legitimate pantheonic consideration can utter dreck like MEATMEN and SOCIAL DISTORTION have weighed against two of the greatest hardcore punk records ever conceived, included solely because Pushead balked at the idea of front-loading 7 consecutive records by the same band and, presumably, because he had never heard NOG WATT or the COMES at the time of publication?

Like a father confronted by the Old Testament God, Pus-y chose just one child: the "Fight Back" 7". Frightening, prophetic, the blueprint for a million would-be could-bes, no one has come close to replicating the message and mayhem of this record, and no one ever will. Likewise, despite their shirts adorning the barrel chests of now-erstwhile edgemen's high-gloss press photos for decades, the seeds spilled forth from the bitter fruit of SSD's "Get It Away" were smothered by the saccharine shade of GORILLA BISCUITS and UNIFORM CHOICE. Springa's unhinged ramblings over Barile's trademark crunch, the whole affair over and done before you know what hit you, they should have retired the trip Xs like a fucking jersey after Al died.

Fast forward a decade or so, Prank is here to educate. The 90s has always been unfairly maligned as an outlier in the Hardcore Punk timeline, forced repentance for pop-punk breaking into the mainstream and a greater emphasis on earnestness and feelings, but if INFEST, CROSSED OUT, and CRUDOS have failed to convince, it's unlikely IN/HUMANITY's "the Nutty Antichrist" will do much to drag you yobs closer to enlightenment. Of the six cuts in question, it's my least favorite, though not remarkably so. It's loud and chaotic, a forebear to the skinny white belt anemiacs still to come, with a petulant sense of humor and penchant for quirky samples, but once

some of the songs hit 2:30 I start looking for the skip button, amusing when we consider the two track "No Reason Why" 7" by Japan's JUDGEMENT. Both clear that mark, but once the extremely 90s melodic intro finally wraps the fuck up, they hit the gas and never let up. Utter and absolute maniacism, and a pleasant start to this crash course of mostly unexplored territory.

While the Wire 100 mostly falls outside of this zine's purview, Martin gave me free reign, so blame him. An anecdote: one time, a mostly spoken word track of PIERRE AKENDENGUE's came on at work and got vetoed, but they were all fucking theater kids, preferring Sutton Foster's rendition over "Anything Goes" over Patti LuPone's, so what the fuck do they know anyway? Pete's "Nandipo" is a beautiful record start to finish, though I admittedly lack the critical language necessary to successfully contextualize it amongst its peers. For idiots like you and me, imagining some of these cuts in a mixtape nestled next to groups as diverse as 15-60-75, PARLIAMENT/FUNKADELIC, or ALGEBRA SUICIDE helps the brain grow strong.

I would imagine most of the assembled readership would be quickest to emulate the fucking theater kids transgression re: "Shooting At The Moon," the 1970 long player from KEVIN AYERS & THE WHOLE WORLD, but you'd be wrong and foolish. And dumb. A background spin may imply some degree of highfalutin, post-Woodstock, proto-AOR wankery, but every successive listen has revealed more and more. Sinister inclinations and heartbreak unrecoverable, the last dying breaths of the nuclear family, the soundtrack to societal collapse, the last flash of light before you get snuffed in a Michael Mann flick.

(The boss is breathing down my neck! Nearly 200 words over the line with still so much more to say! Til next time, True Believers!)

—Ralph Rivera

one giant cooperative. It might be an ethical approach to being a “working musician” under capitalism, but that isn’t a priority for me. You shouldn’t have to join a huge complex business model just to share (or sell) your demo or record online. It’s also just hype right now, and I’m skeptical of hype in general.

Conclusion: be DIY online

There is a clear contrast between Subvert, which is a closed-source single centralized platform (albeit with an ethical-ish business model), and Mirlo, who are working to build an open-source platform that anyone could use to create their own DIY Bandcamp. I find Mirlo more promising for punks, because of this alignment with DIY: it’s a tool that any of us can use to do it ourselves, rather than yet another centralized platform that can fall out from under us.

If you are looking for somewhere to move your music to today, Mirlo’s own instance is live right now for anyone to share/sell their music, but you can also DIY a band website using Faircamp (like RECALL — <https://recall.rocks>), or use Neocities (like DEADBOLT — <https://deadbolt.neocities.org>). Or something else. Just dub some demo tapes at home. Whatever you do, just consider: are you pushing the envelope of autonomy, or just joining another centralized platform with a makeover?

As this is one of my special interests, I’ll be following all of these projects and continuing to try them out. Please get in touch if you have an opinion or perspective to share!

—Martin Force



THINK #1

i. can ya smell it?

Disappointed some months (pushing a year?) ago at the various reactions and soundbites regarding Hardcore Band A and Hardcore Band B doing “Hardcore Band” things, I incurred the memetic damage and ruminated, holistically speaking, and now, a scant 8 months later — again, read elsewhere, time is meaningless, save the record keeping for

the punchout clock, I spent those months working sixty hours and tearing my knee apart and grieving the loss of my best friend, and maybe, perhaps, this is all meaningless in the grand scheme-of-Things — I believe my disappointment warrants explanation and now We find Time.

Disappointed, not, I should clarify, because of any doubt regarding the facts of the case. They happened, we know this. Disappointed instead because of the explication amongst my Hardcore Punk fellows far more aligned in vision, focus, intention, aesthetics, et cetera with myself than the accused, that the actions of Hardcore Band A and Hardcore Band B were somehow in fact Hardcore Band behavior, as though these behaviors were not rampant amongst Punk Band A and Punk Band B and Punk Band C, and likewise speckled and spattered amongst the Grindcorers and Power Violent and Bicycle Messengers and Vegan Lawyers and the list is thousands long (though, presumably, not the way FILTH envisioned).

There’s no names named this go ‘round, because I’ve named them a million times and will a million times more, but it’s a grave danger to assume that this is an Elsewheres problem. As we await the downfall of embarrassing bands with embarrassing web presence, circling the tent before we all point and laugh at the clowns, keep an eye on the danger just as likely found in our own backyards, personified not by strangers, but friends and confidants with bad haircuts and questionable chord progressions all the same. The depressingly banal truth is how evenly spread said behaviors are across all subculture and, indeed, all culture and all life.

ii. are you listening?

The big project this year was to work my way through three lists: the Pushead 100, its successor — Best of the 90s DIY Hardcore according to Prank Records, and the Wire’s “100 Records That Set The World On Fire (While No One Was Listening),” all distinct, yet surprisingly “in conversation” visions of What constitutes What demanding exploration. The project’s purview was inevitably expanded to include the Wire’s 30 album addendum, as well as all records granted the illustrious Five Mic designation by Source Magazine, but was delayed (read: abandoned) due to being a piece of shit, instead willing away the months

Skull Fest 2025 Reportback

by Greg the Builder • Photos by Joe The Photo Guy

Another humid mid-atlantic August means another Skull Fest in lovely steel city, Pittsburgh, PA. I know, I know, “another fest?” How many fests do we really need? I don’t really know, but for me at least, Skull Fest feels like the one that breaks the mold. Instead of being a weekend of punk and hardcore curated by one person’s taste, Skull Fest is a true collaborative effort. You get a mix of punk that is sure to hit all your sensibilities: punk, hardcore, hardcore punk, crust, goth, and for better or worse, even oi.

The amount of bands playing Skull Fest is overwhelming and you are sure to get as much as you can handle, but the main reason I love going to Skull Fest is hanging out. Most shows have an opportunity to see all your friends, there’s the punk’s picnic, the afterparty, and of course the trips to Page’s Dairy Mart for some vegan Oreo peanut butter arctic swirls or eating Spak Bros by the Sphynx with boobs statues in that graveyard.



Amerikkka’s current political climate and tightening border policies had a noticeable impact on the usual handful of international bands this year. Regardless, there were still some banger sets every night. I wasn’t there, but my collaborator on this report back, Joe the Photo Guy, said SEX DWARF (who might have been the only fully international band?) were wild Thursday night.



My weekend started Friday by missing all of the matinee show because somehow it ran way ahead of schedule. The last half of ZYCLONE’s last song was good though! Later that day, I popped into Spirit to catch SHORT LEASH (who played a surprising and welcomed 86 MENTAL-ITY cover), and IRON LUNG. Those 2 dudes still got it.

After some Sexless // No sex I had a lovely walk over

to the Profane Existence 36th anniversary show. FLOWER played another powerful set and were followed by the first of two DESTROY sets of the weekend. I didn’t know what to expect from the DESTROY set but it rocked. They were tight, loud, and still



angry. As a sidenote, I had no idea the guitarist of NO STATIK was in DESTROY. Sick. Upstairs from the Profane show, I caught EARLY GRAVE, a killer band from Philadelphia, PEACE TALKS, who are always great live, and UNIFORMED SERVICES, another band from Boston who has that Boston sound and does it really well. I tried to stay up for the aftershow, but I'm a morning person and I know my limitations, so I unfortunately never got to see SEX DWARF. Bummer.

Saturday started at the Prevention Point matinee show. This is where my enjoyment of hanging out started to conflict with seeing all the bands playing. I ended up only seeing CHILDREN WITH DOG FEET, who played a very sick PENI cover, and WHO PAYS?. I also got in trouble for playing a game of Commander in an area we shouldn't have been in, but that's a story for another time. From there I headed back to Spirit for that night's crust show. DESTRUCT proved once again that they are one of the best bands in this horrible country I live in. DROPDEAD ripped. After all these years the anger, passion, and commitment the message is still there. Bob gave several impassioned speeches, something I feel is missing from most shows today. I caught the first half of DESTROY's second set and it was still good.

From Spirit I headed over to Spirit Quest where I will admit I went to the Oi show, but friendship rocks and I wanted to see my homies in SECLUSION play. Genuinely enjoyed their set. Afterwards, I hung around to catch some of NO TIME where their singer Adam (who is also a Skull Fest organizer) once again put his body on the line and broke his hand from rocking too hard.

Much like the night before, no matter how much I intended to go to the aftershow to see CONDUMB, a band who put out one of my favorite records of the year, I went to bed.

Sunday's matinee show is usually my favorite show of the weekend. The lineup for this one had some last minute changes. MACHINE GUN and DEMON-STRATE, a band that proves straightedge is still punk, unfortunately didn't play, BUT we were blessed with a second FLOWER set. Right before that bonus set was ULTIMATE DISASTER who give their fellow Richmond dwellers, DESTRUCT, a run for their money for best band in Amerikkka at the moment. UD into FLOWER was my favorite two set combo of the weekend. I would listen to a UD/FLOWER split

share music online. A project that isn't a new centralized site, but something that is open-source and self-hostable, so we can DIY it. I want punks to be able to both share and listen to each other's music online without having to deal with a shitty company or corporate platform.

Faircamp is a (free, open-source) static site generator. Basically, it's a program that makes a website that looks like a Bandcamp band/label profile. All the releases and tracks are organized nicely and presented for streaming/download. It doesn't handle any payments or sales (but you can include a link to a PayPal to receive money). To use Faircamp, you install it on your computer, give it all your wav files, art, notes, lyrics, and Faircamp will put it all together and generate the HTML files. But, crucially, you need to take those HTML files and put them on a server yourself in order to have something people can reach on the Internet. It's a bit technical and not easy for everyone. It's not like Bandcamp where you can log in and just drag and drop everything to create or update a profile.

But Faircamp is not what I'm dreaming of. Ultimately, I want something open-source and self-hostable so anyone can set up a DIY Bandcamp. Some technical skill from a person like me would be needed to set up each site, but bands could easily just sign up and upload their music as they do with Bandcamp now. I could run one of these for my local bands here, labels could run them for releases they put out, basically any person or group could set up their own. Hosting stuff on the Internet costs money, but any of these little autonomous Punkcamp sites could decide if they want to throw benefit shows, collect donations, or take a small cut of sales. It's the same principle behind the decentralized Ask A Punk calendars, or Mastodon and the Fediverse.

There are two projects I know of that are working on something like this. One is Mirlo and the other is Bandwagon. Both are open-source and plan to be self-hostable soon. Bandwagon is also part of the Fediverse (you can follow a band's page from a Mastodon account) and Mirlo has plans to add Fediverse features as well. I'm in touch with the creators of both projects, eagerly awaiting when I can try setting up my own version. When that happens I'm sure you'll hear about it on The Counterforce.

Finally, as far as I can tell, Subvert is just a zine and a bunch of graphic design and unknown money sources pretending to be a radical Bandcamp alternative. I haven't seen or heard anything about to suggest that it isn't just a scam.

Two updates since that answer:

1. Mirlo

Mirlo has since received a substantial grant for developing decentralization features from the NLnet Foundation (a Netherlands non-profit that funds projects to contribute to an "open internet"). This means Mirlo is well-supported for the next little while to both become part of the Fediverse, and to be much easier for someone like to use it to build my own "DIY Bandcamp". Here's their blog post announcing their plans (<https://mirlo.space/team/posts/funding-federating-mirlo>). Following this work, small punk scenes or punk labels or anyone who wants to share (or sell) their music online could set up their own Mirlo. And I won't nerd out on the Fediverse stuff here, but it'll be cool too!

2. Subvert.fm

I was maybe a bit harsh on Subvert.fm as I had not looked closely at their website in a minute. They are now in "alpha" (though it's only open to members who bought the \$100 zine). On their blog, they have published quite a lot of internal documents, demonstrating their formation of a complex cooperative model, with artist-members, label-members, supporter-members, etc., and a share investment model that allows them to raise investor capital a bit like a start-up. I'm a bit wary of that, particularly because they mention raising \$650,000, but the link to provide more info "about the funding we took, the funding we didn't accept" doesn't actually deliver that (at least not today). There's just a lot of tech start-up vibes in general once you start to poke around. But I think their motivations are in the right place. It's probably not a scam, and at least they are mostly transparent if you can read through all the docs.

But is it a good fit for punks? Besides the vibes, it's a very bureaucratic business model with a lot of potential stakeholders who will have potentially conflicting goals. I don't think it really make sense for all musicians, labels, and interested investors/supports to be in

sounds for a decade, they probably are writing music in their own style already.

The references could be multiple, but think about weird hardcore. DIE KREUZEN, some CRAZY SPIRIT, certain YDI parts, etc. You know what I mean, right? Well if you don't, just listen to the damn album!

Along the tracks I can hear rugosities, textures, changes and a very great production in the whole album. I love the drums and bass, they give a solid presence to the music with a very specific tone for the second, a flavor with big personality. But what amazes me the most are the guitar licks, that escape of the classic power chords played as fast as possible. Combined with the bass and the dark growled vocals they take you to a very dark place.

I hope this band keeps writing music and touring for so many years, it would be a pleasure to listen to them for another decade (if we are not totally deaf by then).

TERMINAL FILTH – Traces Towards Oblivion

When you listen to TERMINAL FILTH you have to be prepared for long songs. But that kind of songs that are a good trip, with parts that evolve in total different passages. Use this music to take that train, metro or bus in the morning in the way to work: I promise you will want to kill everyone in that shitty workplace without a single drop of coffee. These Berliners are masters of the sounds they deliver, they control precisely the timings and how every sound should be in its correct place. Of course we are talking about a crust band, maybe nearly death metal one, or just a stenchcore band that could be already a classic with their own style.

Traces Towards Oblivion is an amazing release, and since I'm not even close to an expert of these sounds I will let you decide which are the influences. If albums were wine I could recommend you to take this one with a bit of HELLSHOCK, BOLT THROWER and DEVIATED INSTINCT. But that's just my opinion and albums are not wine, so do whatever you want to. Their live show here was incredibly good, making this album be on repeat in my mp3 player. This is a must for anyone into this genre. Really. Listen to it. Please.

—Marginal



I WILL DO MY WORST #1

I get asked by other punks pretty regularly about this or that new alternative online music sharing app or platform. This question has become more common in the last few weeks which suggests the tide is really starting to turn against Spotify. That's great, but I share the anxiety of many that a mass "Spotify exodus" is likely result in people jumping to something new that might be novel but won't really be fundamentally better.

I'm going to just share an answer I gave to a question about "Bandcamp alternatives" in regards to DEMO FEST in a recent (Sept 29th, 2025) interview with DIY Conspiracy. I've abridged my answer slightly, and at the end I'll add some updates. Go read the full interview on diyconspiracy.net if you are interested!

DIY CONSPIRACY: Those almost 200 demos from the first DEMO FEST were all uploaded on Bandcamp, but for DEMO FEST 2025 you're trying out a static site generator called Faircamp. It would be really interesting to hear more about that. Also, what do you think of emerging Bandcamp alternatives like Ampwall and Subvert?

MF: There are maybe a dozen different alternatives akin to Ampwall which are trying to callback to Bandcamp's earlier days, sometimes with a slightly more ethical business model. These projects generally offer little or nothing that's structurally or fundamentally different from Bandcamp. A few are cooperatives, which is more interesting. But overall, they are just proposals for another centralized online music distribution business. There is nothing to stop them from becoming shitty in 5-10 years, forcing us all to find something new again. I'm not interested in options like that.

Instead, I want something that lets us have more control and autonomy over how we



PAPRIKA, Big group photo, DE RODILLAS



until my turntable broke. The one thing noticeably missing from Sunday afternoon was the Evil Ways wrestling show that has happened the past few years. I think Cole puts a lot of effort and care into giving a group of people who might not know what the fuck is going on a good show. The man truly cares about the art form of death-match wrestling.

My Skull Fest closed out with the STORMCROW gig. I caught ZYCLONE again who fucking RIPPED, holy shit that band is good live, and LANGUID, who are from Edmonton, Canada but might as well be from Sweden. Absolutely perfect ANTI-CIMEX worship. This was STORMCROW's first gig on this side of the country, which sounds like it can't be true but I guess it is! It was a very sick set, they sounded great and was a nice endcap to the weekend.

I did not expect to write this much about the weekend. I think how I approach Skull Fest is different from others, but punk gave me a ton of great friendships and for me it's a celebration of that. Can't wait for next year. Thanks to Joe for the pictures. I think he does a great job capturing "the culture". 📸



Above: DESTRUCT
Right: Some well-hydrated homies (your author included)

have. This previous month I went to some shows that I enjoyed a lot, and I returned home a few times thinking that punk is amazing. Mostly I saw friends live, which is even better, some in projects I didn't know or that are just new.

Life is strange, and maybe even more so in our little punk corner. One day you're meeting some punks for a few hours, maybe staying at their house or playing together somewhere in the world, and after a few years with no knowledge of each other, you meet again and it's like finding some good old friends. This is what happened with NURSE a few days ago. We played together (I believe they even put on our show) in Atlanta in 2017 and stayed with them. Then in 2019 we were so lucky to play again there with them, and finally now, in 2025 they played in Barcelona (in my neighborhood!). I do not need to convince you that the show was amazing, they proved it everywhere over the last nine/ten years!

I was so excited to see NURSE and mildly curious about local bands. It was not the best day for me, I was kinda nervous, and I was ready to stay at the door the whole show. Well, that's exactly the opposite of what happened. Besides seeing all the bands, I was impressed by SÖT. I love to see people that have been part of many other projects for years doing a band that sounds as big as this one. Their sound was perfect for a melodic punk act, and there was even a MASSHYSTERI cover (and another one of THE CURE I think?), so you know what the deal is.

The next day I went to see the Berliners TERMINAL FILTH and SPEED KOBRA with their heavy crust at Blokes Fantasma, a classic punk squat from Barcelona that is at risk of eviction. They also played with SAYÓN and OFENSA. I wasn't able to see OFENSA because I was talking with friends I haven't seen in a long time, but SAYÓN did an amazing job. I think it was the best show I saw of them. After them, TERMINAL FILTH delivered tons of heavy sounds that smashed our heads. It was magic, I couldn't believe how good this band was. Then SPEED KOBRA finished the job with another demonstration of musicianship and powerful vocals.

A couple weeks later DISAFFECT also visited our city! Again at Blokes, a perfect place for a punk show. These legends from the 90s still deliver an incredibly powerful anarcho-punk,

and I would say that more than a hundred punks went to see them on a weekday. It's beautiful to see how different generations get together to enjoy punk! I left the venue thinking how beautiful this community is, how great it is that someone who started to play in the 90s can still come to Barcelona in a total DIY way, with the same passion after more than 30 years.

As you can see (or read), we had a lot of fun lately over here. I recommend you to listen to all these bands and support them if they come to your city (they will, I'm sure about it)!

SÖT – Crema-ho tot

SÖT is a new band with members of PÖLS and NAFRA, with mostly all the members from Almacelles or Lleida, if I'm not mistaken. You should check Almacelles on Wikipedia and then keep reading this. They have bands there, record their music, started a social center, publish easily the BEST punk fanzine in Spanish/Catalan that exists nowadays (SI-LENCIO TÓXICO) and are the nicest people on Earth! These are things you don't expect from a town of around 7000 people.

The Spanish scene had many melodic punk acts like this one in its history. There's examples like ELEKTRODUENDES and the more recent ACCIDENTE, but the list is so long. As many other punks from Spain I was also influenced by those sounds and lyrics. SÖT is a new take on that style, a bit more darker, sometimes it could be classified as post punk. Their musicianship is excellent, from vocals to drums everything is where it should be.

After a few listens of the LP the melodies of the vocals got stuck in my head, and some lyrics started to come to my mind in random situations. I love the compositions, I feel like every song has new details in every listen, and they put a lot of effort on making this a perfect album. I kinda feel like this band will be big as soon as they start to tour and release more music of this quality!

NURSE – S/T (III)

Referred as III in their own bandcamp page but as "Nurse" in State Laughter Records page, I do not know what's the real name of this release. Anyway, this is a pure NURSE record, very modern sounds, mixing some kind of goth vibe with what I see as a big influence from 00s/10s NYC punk, but I may be totally wrong. NURSE have been doing this kind of

a ferocious stance. "Polico Fikas Aĉulon" (Police Fucking Bastard?) is an amazing starting track, and now my favorite Esperanto phrase since I even wear a badge with it. It sounds way better than in English!

I would like to reference this music with other bands that you might like, but it's just a perfect example of Japanese uniqueness brutal hardcore, an experiment with sound that doesn't feel like an experiment at all, but a very well-prepared punk act. Do you like DISRUPT, DOOM, LIFE, even some DISCLOSE? I know, they sound different, but then you will like SOCIO LA DIFEKTA. Kreski is not the only release of this band, they later released a promo recorded in their practice rooms only for their Japanese tour with SUBDUED.



VOĈO PROTESTA – Neniam Konfidu Al La Stato

Japan, Japan, Japan! Fuck Japan and every state! Fuck borders! But when we talk about Esperantist punk, I think the best we can do is not get far from this territory and their amazing scene. VOĈO PROTESTA are one of the first bands I learnt that were still using this language. We played with them in Tokyo in 2018 after MALIMPLIKI and I couldn't believe what I was seeing (or hearing). That night was probably the one when I finally started to have that feared chronic tinnitus. It can be a kind of punk baptism, or the start of a punk retirement, it depends on how you want to see it. Here I am seven years later, so I guess I chose my path for the rest of my life: being deaf and lying to myself making me think I like a lot of bands that sound like white noise.

Anyway, we are here to talk about music (not noise hehe). I decided to choose this VOĈO PROTESTA release because it sounds amazing, and I feel like it's a bit overlooked compared with their previous LP Vojo Al Libereco. "Never trust the state" is the title of these songs of classic sound passed through

a Japanese crusher crust filter, but very subtle compared with their other recordings. Actually, it sounds more "hardcore" than their previous releases, but they still are pretty extreme in a good way. I'm talking here as if we were friends in a bar having some beers, so don't mind my vague descriptions, this is not a scientific investigation.

Neniam Konfidu Al La Stato is a powerful album, with incredible references like the one to "Historia de un sucio policia" by IV REICH. Soldida Policia is a perfect cover and interpretation that made me jump in excitement once I listened to the first riff, a classic of Iberian punk. It amazes me to see the different sound and style VOĈO PROTESTA used here. I'm not going to lie, I love IV REICH so much, but I wish they would have sounded like this. The rest of the album continues with this reinterpretation of 80s classics that I guess are from all over Europe, especially from the Scandinavian countries. The songs are short but not too short, the mix is, in my honest opinion, perfect. And the album cover, like the previous LP is made by Teodoro Hernández: if you don't know him, you better start to check OTAN and the zines that produced over the last 20–30 years.

I heard that some people from VOĈO PROTESTA were at the Esperantist society of Tokyo, but I'm not sure about this. I hope they are still active, but I guess they aren't since I haven't heard of them in the last few years. Please check their whole discography, it's pure gold! And translate the lyrics to find a way to express anger through a non-colonizer language!

—Marginal



COLUMNA MARGINAL NOVEMBER 2025

The powerful feeling after a good punk show is undeniably one of the best feelings you can

DON'T INVERT THE ART

by Hobbes

Punks like black shirts. This is an irrefutable fact. As a food spilling person, I am of the same mindset and will always choose a shirt in the punkest shade over any other color. But is there an unknown cost we have all been paying while hiding pit stains?

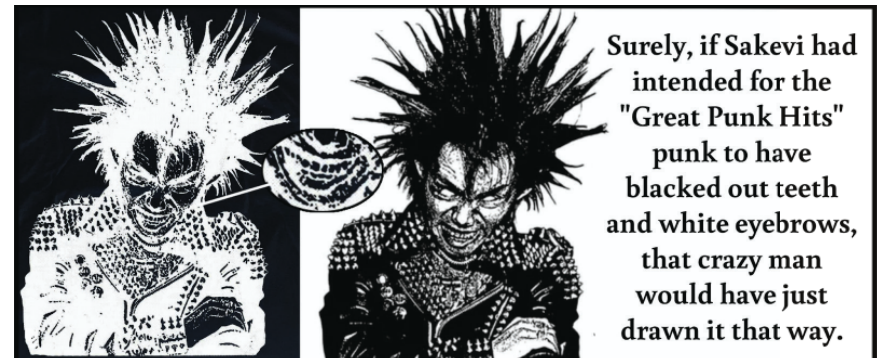
Let's get started. My friends, what comes to your mind when you see these two examples?



Do you notice something a little strange? Well, if it doesn't bother you yet that *the* titular black flag is now a white flag, I will show you a few more examples to further drive my point home.



On the left shirt, the design is completely gone. The detail of this Frankenstein artwork is lost and has become unrecognizable.



Surely, if Sakevi had intended for the "Great Punk Hits" punk to have blacked out teeth and white eyebrows, that crazy man would have just drawn it that way.



SKULL TALK

There is no condition known on this earth that causes a person to have a black skull with white eye sockets. Even upon death. I'm sorry to break it to you, but this phenomenon exists solely within punks-fucking-up-artwork. We have decided, as a genre, that we do not care about blacked out teeth and glowing white eye holes – as long as it means the design goes on a black shirt.



Even more confusing, as you'll notice in some of the above examples, is when we take a skull that was actually adapted for a black background, and flip it anyway to go back on to a white shirt.



COLUMNA MARGINAL OCTOBER 2025

I don't care about Halloween. It's not part of my culture and I don't want it to be part of anything around me. I openly hate the North American/British culture, which, for some reason, is cooler than our traditional celebrations that are old (very old) and beautiful, normally related to nature. The only good thing about this cultural colonization is that I can speak and write English, so I'm able to communicate with many people that I couldn't otherwise. But why is English the global language and not Catalan? The same thing will be thought by the people of Peru about Spanish, and I totally support them in their defense of Quechua, Aimara, etc. Why do we have to use a colonizer language?

Well, since I'm aware of the good part of speaking an understandable language by many people (I refuse to consider it "common", since, for me, it is a foreign language that I was forced to learn in order to be able to study, work and be an average citizen), and I'll keep writing using it, but I'm going to invite you, dear reader, to learn new languages that do not represent the capitalism and colonizers of the world. Learning a language may sound challenging, but it actually takes an hour per day to understand the basic things in about a month or two. You probably have that time! If you're a native English speaker, you can consider it this way: many of those who speak English had that time to learn so we could communicate with you. Why are you not making that effort?

Okay, let's make it easier. There's a perfect language for those who don't have much time and speak languages that come from Europe: it's called Esperanto. Yes! It still exists! It's a beautiful language with a beautiful community, a bit similar to punk in many ways. For

example, people travel through the world visiting esperantists because they know they will have a lot in common, so they trust each other. Sounds a lot like punk, to be honest. Also, esperantists hold events constantly so they all meet there, and if you attend one they will love to find new people into this language and values. Very punk, isn't it?

The values and political context where Esperanto is developed can be found in many places, I recommend you to check it. But since it's the start of the month and I'm actually recommending you some music from Bandcamp, I decided to add some esperantists that make music :) I hope you enjoy them and try to translate their lyrics and titles. That's how I learnt English when I was 10: translating Green Day lyrics!



SOCIO LA DIFEKTA – Kreski

My current favorite esperantist band is SOCIO LA DIFEKTA, a Japanese band that takes the sound of the crust anarchopunk from the 90s/early 00s and brings it back. They share members with another band that also uses Esperanto as a main language, MALIMPLIKI, and also share members with other amazing bands like UNARM and BLISTERING NOISE.

This EP is a little gem for those interested in anarchopunk. Using Esperanto for their lyrics is a big stand against any colonizer culture. Remember that Japan was (and could be argued that it still is) a colonizer nation, and that the US had invaded and controlled them since World War II, changing the country forever. Also, anarchism is not the most popular political option in Japan, not even in punk, so this band is challenging in many ways all that they have around.

The music is a non-stop hardcore attack, with brilliant musicianship and the amazing effect of two vocals that turn this noisy punk act into

rain that pretty much did not stop all night, lightly dusting our electronic equipment and creating problems with gear, prolonging the show's start to at least 3 hours after alleged start time.

Miraculously, the generator held on, and RAT HENRY finally kicked it off with some stellar 39 CLOCKS-style catchy and down tempo post-punky, scrappy guitar music. My band, RIBBON STAGE then showed up for a surprise super-short set. In true B & R fashion, we were added to the lineup two days beforehand, and had only practiced with a new band lineup once before our three-song debut. Naturally, it was a mess. I didn't love looking like a drowned rat while desperately trying to pee in the bushes before playing to an impatient crowd of some of my most beloved and annoying peers, but one has to pretend to be hardcore and not care about such luxuries.

JEANINES played after us, coming down from Western Mass to blast their saccharine and melody-laden clean indie tones through demonically loud amps, allowing Alicia's clear and dreamy vocals to shred the whole waterfront. Other bands included the always great GALORE from SF, whose recent LP "Dirt" was one of my favorites of 2025 and quite overlooked in my opinion. Also on the lineup were MOPAR STARS, a Philly favorite with members of SHEER MAG and POISON RUIN who have an upcoming debut record on K in 2026. I think the show finished before 3am, but at least there were delis nearby if you felt like hopping the fence again to get to them

We closed out the weekend at the amphitheater at Far Rockaway, an almost refreshingly "normal" venue by virtue of having a bathroom you could walk to close by — one that even had toilet paper lovingly provided by the NYC Parks Department. Due to permitting issues, the show had to start late and end early, but the morale was high as artists like BULLSEYE took the sunny stage. It was a lovely, sunny day and Dan Dimaggio and I took a dip in the water, which was definitely too cold at the absolute tail end of summer but still a necessity at the rock show. We didn't put our shoes back on and indulged in the amphitheater's smooth floored safety to dance barefoot to Canada's sweethearts, GARDEN OF LOVE. A Sunday highlight, the three piece was fronted by Donna's frequent collaborator and multimedia artist Jane Harms who joined us from Montreal. They shared the stage with indie mainstays LIGHTHEADED from New Jersey, as well as hometown heroes the avant-garde AUTOBAHN who heralded the younger end of fest participants. I watched them while eating more nourishing yet slightly bland vegan food, provided by the illustrious Food Not Bombs squad once again.

The sun set on a successful event that brought together like-minded freaks from across the spectrum of whatever might be called "independent rock music." The collective also graced us with a compilation tape and zine with artists who played, printed on newsprint and effectively capturing the ethos of Bread and Roses in all its xeroxed glory, available on an esoteric Youtube link. The fest's vibe was decidedly inaccessible — yes they provided all the coordinates, but you had to will yourself to get there, descending into the "freaks only" kind of atmosphere. You have to really want to be there to be there, but somehow hundreds of people did.

Overall we were lucky to be together and have fun especially in a city with increasing brutality toward those who fall outside the mainstream, and I'm grateful to the organizers for creating such a dangerous and inclusive environment. Yes, the dream of the 90's is dead and "indie rock" no longer exists, but for one dazzling weekend its corporate capture could be ignored to keep the DIY dream alive in NYC. 🍷

LET'S FIX IT

Talk To The Artist

First and foremost, it's always worth reaching out to the artist before you change the background color or reverse the design. They'll understand how the shapes and details behave when everything gets darker, and they can help you avoid odd-looking highlights or loss of detail. If you want extra gold stars, telling your artist ahead of time that you intend to do black shirts will be helpful in their design process.

Ask Your Screenprinter

Assuming you're not ordering your shirts or patches off some sketchy Redbubble site, this is a great option. Screenprinters are used to adapting artwork drawn on white to print cleanly on black. They can re-balance the lines and colors properly. Just make sure you're communicating this is your desire — and confirming that they won't just invert the design. While preparing to write this instructional, I asked a screenprinter for their opinion on our tendency to invert designs and they had this to contribute: *"Just last week a band came in with artwork of a hooded executioner, but due to their poor choice in ink colors — the executioner suddenly became a klansman. You don't want that. Please don't invert your art."*

Do It Yourself

Armed with a touch of Photoshop competence, you can avoid socializing entirely and absolutely solve this issue yourself. I'll show you an easy trick that'll enable you to adapt most designs to go on to black shirts for the rest of your punk life. It's nothing fancy, and it'll feel like second nature after running through it a couple of times yourself. Let's go!

QUICK PHOTOSHOP DIY

We're gonna work on our boy Ratfink here. Someone desecrated our favorite garbage rat and we're going to fix it together so he can be properly appreciated on a black shirt.



To Begin: Access Editing Software

Pirate it, borrow it from a friend, do not pay hundreds of dollars for a digital program. You can also use something like photopea.com which is basically a free Photoshop dupe for your browser.

Step 1: File > Open

Don't work off the screenshot your bandmate sent you in the group chat. Find the original and open it. Ideally you want a decently large scan of the artwork.

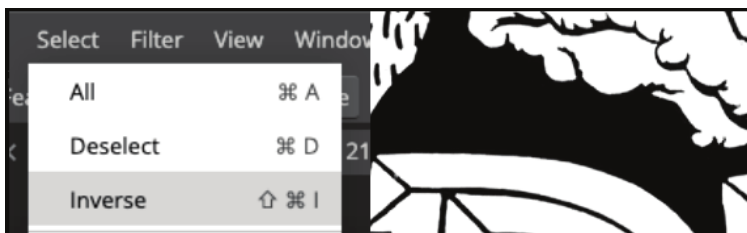
Step 2: Remove Background Around The Art

Use the Magic Wand Tool (Shortcut is the W key) to select all of the white background around the art. Hit backspace to delete those areas once they're selected.



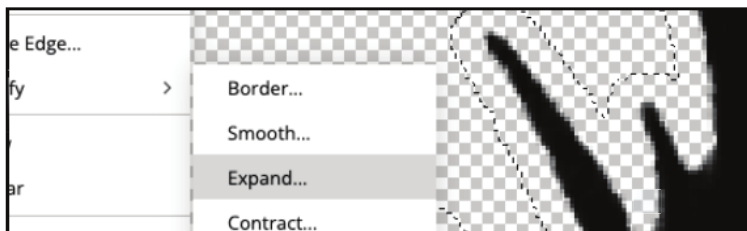
Step 3: Select The Artwork

With the entire transparent background selected (Hold shift to select multiple areas), you can isolate the artwork by now going to Select > Inverse. Now only the artwork will be selected.



Step 4: Expand Selection

Go to Select > Modify > Expand. Try 5 pixels and press OK. This makes a sort of halo or "forcefield" as a good friend likes to call it around the artwork.



ken bridge and watch your step to meet the dozens of other weirdos huddled about in clumps of woodchips, dangerously close to the poisoned body of water.

Local legend HOME BLITZ opened up the evening with his signature blend of weird-as-fuck, medieval-sounding flamboyant pop guitar genius. It was a treat to see Austin's TOUCH GIRL APPLE BLOSSOM's jangly, heartfelt, HEAVENLY-inspired indie pop, which got everyone moving and feeling good, bopping along to front woman Olivia Garder's sing-song but powerfully twee vocals. A fest highlight was GOOD FLYING BIRDS from Indianapolis, who brought the party down using their multiple tambourines as weapons. The makeshift stage was squished with seven members, jamming raucously with co-singer Susie Slaughter screeching as she passed out loosies to the audience. The band refused to slow down or stop screaming and wiggling for even a second, and their Gen Z exuberance was contagious. I felt for HORSEGIRL, who were still game to go on around 2am, eschewing their usual in-ear-monitor-type professional shows for the complete disorder of Bread and Roses. They were good sports and sounded even better, with their melodic and restrained style of mainstream indie-approved guitar music successfully reaching the outdoor masses, including their compellingly soft vocals that sounded beautiful on even the scraggiest of blown out speakers.

The following day we somehow dusted off for round two, starting up at a church in Ridgewood for the day show. Catered by Food Not Bombs, I sat outside slurping their hearty soup to get brought back to life for the morning show. The basement scene showed out new bands as well as NYC faves, and the most fun was loitering outside getting to know new people who had the enduring curse and blessing of sharing the same subculture. TW33DY from Kansas City were among those new comrades, and their blend of slightly country-twinged, loud, jangly indie fuzzed out the audience with a fun "Cry No Tears" NEIL YOUNG cover. PROVIDERS played their first show, featuring Groovy Mike from VEXX, VANITY, and a million other guitar projects alongside my bandmate David from RIBBON STAGE — better known for TERCER MUNDO, POBREZA MENTAL, HYSTERIC POLEMIX and also a million other international punk bands, as well as Ava from CBS and an eponymous solo project she also performed under.

The daytime event was delightfully accessible compared to Saturday's evening chaos, which was located behind a fence and past a park on the Williamsburg waterfront. Attendees were given coordinates to a location where someone was supposed to walk them into the show area, but I'm not totally sure if such a person existed. Real



"if you know, you know" hours, and don't expect it to be easy if you want an intentionally anti-corporate event. This involved climbing on a literal trash can to get over a fence, then walking another 100 yards down a carpet of broken glass to a small enclave of trees on top of rocks before the East River starts. We were treated to an end of summer

Bread and Roses 2025 Reportback

by Jolie M-A

In the years since 2020, there's been a running joke that punks in NYC are in an ongoing competition to host the most insanely illegal shows. Makeshift "venues" began cropping up all over the city as organizers began outdoing one another, putting hardcore bands in tunnels and behind train tracks for one night only. The morning after, TikToks would surface of flags burning and fireworks exploding in a sea of moshers, somehow in the middle of Manhattan. When there's not much else to turn to by way of DIY venues and everyone is sick of having shows at the same four bars that allow us, it makes sense that the underground becomes not just a necessity, but a badge of alleged authenticity and commitment to keeping a city's scene ungovernable and raw.

In keeping with this tradition, Bread and Roses Fest set the bar for keeping the indie experience... indie. Generator shows are back, and audiences have accepted a level of danger and spontaneity in a city governed by such principles on a daily basis. And there was no one better to do it than their DIY collective, committed to holding the most punk and least-corporate event possible, truly taking "doing it yourself" to another level. Hosting almost 40 bands over three days, the event was advertised via email and a Google drive folder with handmade flyers, many of which were missing a confirmed venue. It ended up that most would be outdoor generator gigs, some permitted and some not, with a phone number to text for the coordinates. The temporary autonomous zone was real: every show started two hours late and was hosted in a pile of trash outdoors, with varying degrees of cooperating PAs and weather. They were all \$20 or Pay What You Can, and rest assured, no one WAS turned away for lack of funds.

The collective, helmed by Donna of CHRONOPHAGE and Jake from BULLSEYE, did a fantastic job of getting together DIY bands from every ether of the indie and punk spectrum. It was a group effort though, with so many types of people helping out to ensure that the show could and did go on, even when logistical hurdles threatened to extinguish some of our fun. Their intent of "uniting anarchist and communist non-hardcorists and peace punks for the sake of enriching our connections and community" seemed quite successful. Indeed, they gathered some of the best and most committed underground artists across North America, with a dynamic crew of people, blasted into the chaos of an uncontrollable and spirited festival.

The first festival evening was located in an almost comically cutty "venue" carved out of a scrap of a skatepark along Newton Creek in a seemingly abandoned and industrial part of Long Island City. Walking there consisted of a pigeon-shit-splattered overpass with shattered bottles littering the abandoned sidewalk — not a bodega in sight — through a cinematic wasteland with no homes, just pure industrial filth. In order to get to the garden where the generator was set up, you had to scuttle across a bro-



Step 5: White Border

Make sure you have the color white selected in your palette. Create a new empty layer behind the artwork. Use that layer to fill your selection you just made with white by going to Edit > Fill. Set it to Foreground and press OK.



Step 6: Test It Out On Black

Create a black background layer and try out the design. Erase parts of the border that don't fit, adjust the size of the border to suit the art.



Isn't he lovely? Now you can at the very least see where his damn eyes are looking. This is a simple five-minute dirtbag method of adapting a design to be readable on a black background.. Now imagine if you were to spend some time on it, or collaborate with your artist or screenprinter. What a great shirt! I wanna wear that and spill soup all over it! Enjoy! 🍴





A (Sober) Varning XVII Reportback

by Taylor Joy
Photos by Rachael Shorr

A Varning from Montreal Festival is basically Christmas for Montreal punks — a highly-anticipated tradition, an international punk family reunion, and a huge party. Now in its 17th edition, it's currently our city's longest-running punk fest, and lives up to its reputation of bringing in high quality bands from across Canada as well as the US, Europe and even Japan. You might think that the charged-hair, sword-wielding skeletons featured in all the posters and promo material are an exaggeration, but it's not far from how the crowd actually appears, periodically spilling out of a shitty metal bar to stink up Montreal's downtown tourist

shopping core. Armed with a full fest pass, I decided to take full advantage and try and do all 6 shows over 3 days, plus the Saturday punk market. Here's my reportback:

I didn't watch every single band but I tried to catch a little bit of most of them. First, to honourably mention some great local bands: PORTAL TOMB delivered their crushingly heavy hits well, even though bassist Ava had gone through a car windshield a few days prior to the fest and showed up with a nose cast and forehead stitches — a true crust warrior. Fuck cars! WARKRUSHER crushed as much as ever, and I was glad to catch EULOGY again, a newer scandi-flavoured dbeat project featuring well-known local characters. I was wondering if local power-pop quartet PSYCHIC ARMOUR would feel out of place on the bill, but all the rock'n'roll nerds enthusiastically lapped up Sara and Evan's guitar shredding.

There were a few bands that I saw earlier this summer at Scorched Earth in Vancouver that I was excited to see again. Victoria's HEDONIST were high on that list — I'm not a huge metalhead, but they are clearly at the top of their game right now, and their name came up again and again when I asked people for their fest highlights. Vancouver crusters EXTENSIVE SLAUGHTER were excellent, and were also a great crew to hang and enjoy both fests with. Edmonton's LANGUID was "the sonic equivalent of drinking a beer" according to one of my bandmates. Philly's ALEMENT also played

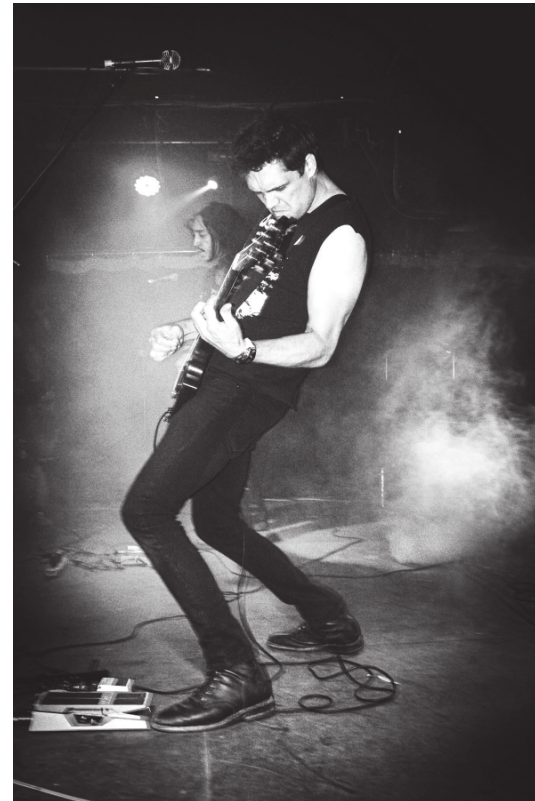


AND EVENTUALLY THE SUN RISES. I OFTEN FEEL, WHEN IT DOES, THAT I'VE EXPERIENCED TOO MUCH ALREADY. THE NEXT DAY IS SPENT FEELING "BETWEEN WORLDS" STUNK



both fests — I have seen them a few times now and had filed them in the category of “bands I can recognize are good but don’t really do it for me,” but at Varning something clicked and I was totally hypnotized by their set.

A high point of face-melting fun and chaos was Friday when ULTRARAT played — a local raw dbeat trio that has recently re-activated, with Nick from MUECO filling in



on bass for this set. Multiple power failures only added to the insanity. At one point, I looked around in the crush of absolutely annihilated punks with shit-eating grins, catching wafts of beer breath and poppers fumes and idly wondered if it was possible to break edge by proxy. I had fun though. Boston’s INNOCENT had a tough act to follow, but they delivered a high-energy set that was one of my favourites of the weekend. Overall, not enough dbeat at Varning this year!! Admittedly, I dipped before Friday’s headliners VARUKERS. I heard they were fun, satisfyingly nostalgic, and didn’t say anything stupid, which is a huge win for any old band.

While I spent the weekend moonlighting as a cruster, I’m a hardcore punk girlie at heart so I must shout-out some sick hardcore punk acts. INVERTEBRATES (Richmond) were super fun headlining the Friday matinée, and local faves TOTAL NADA miraculously brought energy and life to the ill-advised Saturday Aftershow. The hardcore punk bands at Varning

are explicitly more of a palate cleanser than the main event, but any local hardcore enthusiast who missed the matinée with PEI’s CELL DETH and POISON SPEAR really fucked up.

By the time LIFELESS DARK (Boston) and DISTURD (Japan) closed the Saturday main show, I was seriously losing steam — both bands were great but neither blew me out of the water, which is objectively kind of an insane thing to say. Especially about LIFELESS DARK whose three previous Montreal shows have been major highlights of the last 10 years for me.

Some final shoutouts: Ottawa’s BOOT who not only brought energy to one of the toughest slots of the whole fest (opening the Friday Matinée show) but also proved that your Oi! revival band doesn’t have to be a boys club. I also wanna mention TRÄUME from Poland, who headlined on Thursday — I’m not the biggest post-punk fan, but I made sure to catch them at the behest of friends who saw them while touring Europe this summer, and they were really good. I felt additionally lucky to see them, as their travels to Canada were complicated by Russian incursions into Polish



airspace around their departure... as Boris reminded us during TOTAL NADA's set, it's a privilege to be where we are in the world, and we're lucky to be able to come together to celebrate and share our music with each other. The world is getting shittier and scarier, and I'm really grateful to them and all the bands that traversed continents, oceans and borders to come play in Montreal.

The music was great and we had lots of fun — but a few minor caveats:

TOO MUCH SMOKE. Props to the autonomous actor who unplugged the extremely overactive fog machine after a huge puff completely shrouded LIFELESS DARK during the opening riffs of their set. I could barely see the drummers the entire fest, and what's the point of Varning if I can't watch the drummers???

THE AVERAGE ATTENDEE AGE WAS PROBABLY PUSHING 40. A friend told me that when he came to his first Varning in 2008 he also thought "why is everyone here so old" so I guess it's always been this way? Don't get me wrong, I love ancient crusties and I aspire to be one, but I also want the kids to be able to hear actually great bands and participate in a multigenerational scene. I made a joke about how under-25s should get discounted passes, but I am actually kind of serious.

IN BATTLE THERE IS NO SOBRIETY. Varning is a party, and people go really hard with the alcohol, drugs and smoking, even by Montreal standards. It's a tough fest to be sober at — I heard this especially from friends who are early in their sobriety or are just trying to moderate their partying. Piranha bar is a minefield of temptation, annoying coked-up punishers

and probably some sloppy dude randomly trying to kiss you. I'm not trying to shame anyone's consumption, just noting that it's a pretty integral part of the whole vibe of the fest and if that's hard for you to be around it might not be your jam.

SPEAKING OF "SOME SLOPPY DUDE TRYING TO KISS YOU" I heard from a few people who had to deal with creeps or unwanted invasions of their personal space... some of this can be chalked up to the venue, which is not "our" spot by any means but it also overlaps with the point above. It's definitely the kind of show where if I'm trying to take a breather alone after roughly 10pm, I find a decoy friend to stand next to to lessen the likelihood of being creeped on. Yuck.

I guess I mentioned in the intro that there was a Punk Market on Saturday. I tabled PWYC punk/anarchist zines and was a bit more successful than at the night shows (where people didn't take many zines, but rather used them as coasters for their beer). I did up my stud count and snagged a MURO tshirt that Janick was trying to unload, so it wasn't a total flop, but honestly there's not much to say about it other than that it happened.

But on a more positive note — the fest was really well-organized this year. In years past all of the information, announcements, set times, etc., were only on Facebook (yes, Montreal is perpetually in 2005). The introduction of a proper, consistently-updated website this year was a game changer. The organizers also tapped me to design and print paper programs with the schedule and fest info, which I think were a big hit — I saw people consulting them throughout the duration of the fest. Organizers also made sure the info got posted and kept up to date on our local online calendar.

I'm really happy that the organizers prioritized accessible, non-corporate ways of disseminating all the information and I think that it was part of the reason everything ran super smoothly.

Additional huge shoutouts to: 1. Whoever updated the food recommendation list to include mostly vegan/veg options 2. The people who prepared a huge, diverse buffet of delicious and healthy vegan food to feed the bands and volunteers all weekend. 3. The stage managers, who were on top of it and kept everything even slightly ahead of schedule, making sure the main shows ended before the Metro stopped running... until the last night when shit sort of went off the rails. It was bound to happen at some point. While incredible bands and great people can make for a good fest, the level of care and organization put into Varning this year made it truly great. 🙌



Above: HEDONIST. Below: Janick, DISTURD, and other random punks. Opposite: EXTENSIVE SLAUGHTER

